

# Perfection Itself

by FirePhoenix28

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Summary: What happens when Raven and Nero have children? Chaos, of course!

## 1. Welcome to the Twins' World

I

Raven woke up and smiled at Dr. Nero, who was standing in the door. The headmaster smiled back. The visage quickly left the assassin's face, however, as she remembered what she was to do that day. Nero's smile broadened to a grin as he saw that his wife had recalled.

"You don't have to look so pleased about it, Max!" Raven scolded.

Nero laughed. "Of course I do, Natalya. I won't be the one teaching the little rascals how to grapple. But I'm sure you'll do fine. After all, they can't be that bad, can they?"

-An hour later, in the grappler cavern-

"Mummy, do we have to do this?" Lilia whined as Raven attached a pair of grapplers to her wrists.

She turned briskly to Maxim. "Of course you do, if you want your breakfast. It's over on the other side."

"But Mummy, what if we fall in the water? We'll get all wet."

"Well, don't fall in." Raven began to prepare her own grapplers. "Now watch. See, you fire like this, release like this, and this one will reel you in." The children watched as Raven showed them the corresponding buttons and switches. Directly after she finished speaking, the assassin shot a grappler at the ceiling and began making her way across the cavern. Her children watched, awestruck.

When Raven returned, she dropped lightly to the ground in front of the pair. "Now it's your turn. Who's first?"

Each of her eight-year-olds scrambled to get behind the other. After watching for a moment, amused, Raven pointed at Maxim. She privately hoped as she did so that they would be able to finish the exercise, because the last time the children did anything physical, Lilia ended up with a broken arm, and Maxim's nose was spewing blood.

"Ready? Remember how to do it?" Raven was tentative as she asked the question, convinced that it would unleash a torrent of complaints. She was correct.

"Are you sure we have to do this? Why can't we go to Stealth and Evasion instead? What if we get hurt? If we finish, can we have breakfast?" The questions were fast and furious. Raven had anticipated this, and forestalled the pair before they could get any more out.

"To your first, yes. To the second, because you dyed Ms. Leon neon pink last time. To the third, your choice. To your fourth, yes. Now, Maxim, GO!" Raven pushed Maxim to the edge. Maxim promptly backed up. Raven shoved him forward again. Maxim retreated once more. Raven, exasperated, said, "If you don't go within three seconds, you will begin, grappler or no. Oneâ€¦"

Maxim gulped,

"Twoâ€¦"

Looked down,

"You might want to go before I reach threeâ€¦"

And jumped. Raven smiled slightly in relief. Apparently he did want his grappler. Finally, one down, one to goâ€¦ \_Splash!\_ Or not. Spoken too soon.

"Am I finished now?" A dripping Maxim poked his head above the water.

"Oh, why not?" Raven muttered, turning to Lilya. "Your turn."

As Raven came down the corridor with her wet, bedraggled children she attracted a lot of stares. It was strange enough seeing the assassin without Nero, but seeing her yelling at two protesting kids? No child at H.I.V.E. had ever seen the like before.

Lilya was digging in her heels as Raven pulled her to the mess hall. "But I don't want to go to breakfast like this!"

"Well," Raven said through gritted teeth, "if you hadn't crashed into the first obstacle there was, you might not haâ€¦"

Maxim interjected. "Why can't we change first?"

"No." Raven continued towing the youngsters through H.I.V.E. whilst ignoring the confused looks many students were giving her.

Lilya was mystified. "Why not? We'll look nicer."

"Because you'll miss breakfast if you do." Raven was now thoroughly irked. As the trio reached the mess hall, Raven put the pair in line. "You know what to do."

"We don'tâ€|"

Raven ignored the interruption. "Now stay out of trouble until I come back from talking to your father."

Lilya started a sentence. "What ifâ€|"

"JUST STAY HERE!" Raven left the mess hall, glaring at any student who dared to look at her.

-A few minutes late, in Nero's office-

Raven walked into Nero's office, clearly startling the headmaster, who dropped a framed picture of Raven with a thud.

"Really? Looking at me even when I'm not with you? That is pathetic." Raven was just teasing Nero to hide her mixed up feelings. She was flattered that he did it, but also worried that she would have to sit him down and tell him that he better get his head out of the clouds before someone got killed on a mission because of it.

Nero smiled uneasily. "Well, umm, you know you're just so prettyâ€| " His voice trailed off as he saw Raven looking at him with a mixture of love and embarrassment on her face. To cover up his error, Nero quickly asked, "How did the children do?"

"You know, Max, you are just so clueless sometimes. And for your information, they did dreadfully. They have absolutely NO idea of what it means to be our kids. No talent, no sense, nothing at all. Do you know what happened when they first attempted to grapple?"

Nero winced. If Raven asked if you wanted to know, it wasn't a good idea to say yes. But he couldn't help himself. "What?"

"Maxim didn't even fire his grapplerâ€|"

Nero cringed again.

"Lilya barely got anywhere before she hit the first obstacle there was to hitâ€|"

Nero grimaced and made a face.

"And they both essentially did worse than Franz did at his first try."

Nero stifled something that sounded suspiciously like a laugh.

Raven looked at him cautiously, uncertain if he was laughing or coughing. She decided on the former. "This is no cause for amusement. If somebody captures them when, if we take them on an assignment, then whoever the captors are will be able to manipulate us. Can you imagine the consequences if the leader of G.L.O.V.E. and the world's most feared assassin were at some psychopath's mercy?" Suddenly all the fire went out of Raven. "They may be annoying brats, but they're

still our children. I don't want them to get hurt."

Nero crossed over to Raven and enfolded her in his arms. "If anyone harms either of them, there will be hell to pay. I promise."

Raven rested her head on Nero's shoulder, feeling uncharacteristically weak and vulnerable. "I'll hold you to that promise."

"Don't worry. We'll train them. Now let me go teach Villainy Studies."

Raven contemplated Nero. Then, on a whim, she stood and kissed his cheek. "I know." The assassin left the room.

"Ah, well then. I'll see you later." Nero picked up the photo he had dropped earlier, looked at it, set it down carefully, and departed the office for the Villainy Studies classroom, leaving Raven and the children smiling behind him.

## 2. A Little Misbehaviour

**\*\*Disclaimer:** I do not own any of these characters (they all belong to the genius of Mark Walden) except Lilya and Maxim, who are my own OCs.\*\*

-II-

Lilya and Maxim looked around the mess hall in dismay. They did know what to do, but they had never done it alone. One of their parents had always been with them. Raven's aura of menace had acted as protection from any students who felt the need to pick on the two, and Nero's status as headmaster had done the same. Now they were on their own in the middle of breakfast, surrounded by students at least three years older than they, some of them twice the twins' age, and some with some rather€| ruthless personalities.

"I'm not hungry anymore." It was true. Lilya's face was slightly green as she took in the awesome sight of the school, and as she considered that there was no one to protect her if the school suddenly decided it didn't want her there.

The same thoughts were running through Maxim's head. He was turning paler and paler as each new scenario occurred to him. "Neither am I. I don't want to eat now. Let's go find Mummy."

"Why Mummy? She's the one who left us here. Let's go find Daddy." Lilya was indignant despite the fact that she was about to run from the mess hall, screaming.

Maxim considered her logic. "You're right!" He said with an accompanying stomp. "Let's go find Daddy and ask him to play with us."

The duo left the hall in search of Nero, who was currently teaching a Villainy Studies class to the new Alphas, trying to make a good impression.

-Villainy Studies classroom-

"With this in mind, I intend to start today by looking at the illustrious career of one of our past alumni, Diabolus Darkdoom. He was one of the greatest villains the world has ever known. His exploits upon graduating from H.I.V.E. have become the stuff of legends!"

"DADDY, PLAY WITH US!" Maxim burst in the door, Lilya hot on his heels. The twins ran up to the front of the room and latched onto Nero's legs tightly. The headmaster looked down at them in consternation. He attempted shaking them off, but was disappointed with the results. The two just clung tighter.

"Daddy, play!" Maxim looked up at Nero with imploring eyes.

"Why me?" Nero muttered, looking up at the ceiling.

Lilya explained with an offended voice. "Mummy was mean, and then she left. We want you to play!"

Nero continued staring at the roof, giving no sign that he had heard Lilya. "And why now?"

"Because we want you to play. Now!" Lilya and Maxim provided this answer in together.

Nero's eyes remained fixed upwards like his life depended on it.

Maxim released Nero's leg and looked skyward, curious about what H.I.V.E.'s leader was so fascinated by. It had to be interesting. When he saw nothing, he turned his attention back to his father. "Play games with us! We're bored! And Mummy left us all by ourselves in the mess hall."

"Please?" Lilya did likewise and gazed up at Nero with cold blue eyes inherited from Raven that could never look cute. Nero finally stopped glaring a hole in the roof and answered.

"No, no, no, and no again. I am not going to play with you. Go ask Uncle Otto or Aunt Laura or Uncle Wing, or someone. Not me. Can't you see that I have a class?" Nero gestured around the room at the gaping Alphas. Then it suddenly hit him. "I have a class!" He mumbled.

"NATALYA!"

When Nero had called, Raven had been going to the mess hall to collect the twins. She came running; sure he was about to be assassinated. Instead, she found Lilya and Maxim seemingly scolding Nero. He had been looking at them with a dazed expression on his face as they berated him for calling Raven and ending their fun. She had quietly walked in the door and through the Alphas intently watching the drama at the front of the room. Her arrival went unnoticed by the two troublemakers, but Nero had seen and was frantically gesturing for her to come quickly. She had obliged, and increased her speed.

"Bad Daddy. You didn't need to call Mummy." Lilya didn't notice that Raven was quietly coming up behind her.

"Yeah, and now you have to play with us." Maxim said loftily.

Nero's eyes widened as they attached themselves to his legs once again. He looked at the advancing Raven imploringly. "Pleaseâ€¦ get them off."

Suddenly, Maxim and Lilya found their grasp on Nero's legs weakening. Raven, disregarding their best efforts to cling to Nero for as long as possible, pulled them off of him and marched them out of the door. Nero audibly sighed with relief when they were gone, and turned back to his class, only to find that the Alphas were choking on barely suppressed laughter. Nero said two words to himself. "Oh, no."

"Perhaps you shouldn't have a birthday party." Raven's voice was deadly calm, a demonstration of how furious she was. "Perhaps you shouldn't have a birthday party, or better yet, perhaps you should sit in your rooms while we have a birthday party without you."

The threat of no birthday party quieted the twins' constant questions for the time being. Raven knew that it couldn't last, though. Nothing could keep the two silent for any length of time, not even the threat of immediate and total destruction. Sure enough, they soon resumed talking.

"Mummy, why can't we have a birthday party? Why didn't Daddy want to play? Can we have breakfast? Where are we going?"

"Because you don't deserve it. Because he has a class. No. To my rooms. And behave." Raven replied to the questions just to get them to be quiet. The answers were not satisfactory to Lilya, however, and she kept on asking.

"Why don't we deserve it? What class? Why can't we have breakfast? Why your room? What about ours?"

Raven reached the white door of her quarters, and stood in front of the retina scanner. "Access granted, Raven," H.I.V.'s quiet, electronic voice stated. Raven walked inside, pulling her children along. They gaped in wonder at the walls around them. Raven's bed was not a grand affair, but its surroundings were.

Multiple weapons were hanging on three walls, and the remaining wall was split between a map of the school and a map of the world. A door led out of the bedroom to a place likely filled with more weapons and miscellaneous items. For once, the two were at a loss for words for a full minute.

"Whaâ€¦ whatâ€¦ whyâ€¦ huh?" Maxim stammered out.

You could hear the smile in Raven's voice. "Yes, this is where I live. Didn't you know? I am the deadliest assassin in the world. I'm obviously going to have weapons."

Lilya gazed around her with awe, and not without some fear. "I thoâ€¦ thought your rooâ€¦ room would be like miâ€¦"

"Yours? All pink and frilly? No." Raven was laughing. What limited imaginations these two had. Even living in H.I.V.E., and with her for

eight years, they still could not imagine what wonders she could work with her katanas, or any weapons, for that matter. They had never seen her deadly accuracy with a shuriken or gun alike. They had never seen her knock assailants unconscious using nothing but her hands and feet. Raven sobered. She hoped they would never have to.

Raven exited the room after instructing H.I.V. not to allow the two out unless a fatal accident occurred. Lilya and Maxim were left alone in her weaponry-filled accommodations. The items on the walls fascinated them. A section of the room to the left of Raven's bed was devoted to an assortment of throwing stars. Shurikens and chakras of all different types covered the tables and walls. Knives were consigned to another portion of Raven's lodgings. Different sizes and lengths were hanging neatly on the partition. There was some miscellaneous weaponry lying around the room where Raven had put them. And, of course, there was a large collection of swords. Raven had tested and collected many swords throughout her career. Her favourites, the katanas, were the most numerous, but she also had longswords, falchions, and some sabers. In short, it was an impressive display.

"Wow!" Maxim's mouth was open as he circled the room looking at the display. "What does Mummy do with this?"

Lilya's condescending tone told Maxim exactly what she thought of his intelligence. "Duh, she practices."

"But what for?" Maxim was nonplussed by her patronizing attitude.

"What do you think sharp things are for?" Exasperated by his apparent inability to grasp the purpose of weapons, Lilya walked over to the knives and pulled a dagger from its sheath. "See, this is what you do. You stick things with them. Like this." With that, she attempted to jab the knife into the wall. It stuck for a second, and then fell to the floor.

Maxim scoffed. "That? They're supposed to actually stay there. Not fall as soon as you let go of them. See, you do it like this." He turned, searching for a convenient item to demonstrate with. He hit upon one of Raven's katanas, and picked it up. Turning, he stabbed it into the floor. It stuck there between the twins.

"Oh." Lilya was disappointed. Embarrassed that he had succeeded when she hadn't, Lilya located a shuriken and threw it at the wall. "There. Beat that."

Maxim's fighting spirit surfaced with the last words. "Really? I can do sooo much better."

"Oh no, you can't."

"Yes, I can."

"Prove it."

"Fine." Maxim opted for another katana.

"Cheater. That's what I did." Lilya picked up a practice sword and poked Maxim with it. Maxim let out a yell of anger and grabbed it

from her hands.

"Meanie! Don't poke me! Mummy!" When no Raven appeared, Lilya smirked. "Don't laugh!" Maxim frowned and waved the captured item under Lilya's nose to emphasize the point. Lilya didn't take kindly to being threatened by her brother. She told him so, in no uncertain terms.

"Mummy doesn't like you."

"Yes, she does. More than you." Maxim was cross that Raven hadn't answered his call.

This insult was too much for Lilya, and she charged. "WAR!"

### 3. Escaping Retribution

**\*\*Disclaimer:** Again, I do not own any character except Lilya and Maxim, they're all Mark Walden's. **\*\***

-III-

-Nero's office-

"They're in my room now." Raven reported.

"Unattended?"

Raven clarified. "Unattended."

Nero smiled. "Good. We'll see how they do. And in the meantime, do you wish to take a break from them?"

Raven sighed. The two were so difficult to manage. Even she was becoming weary of constantly following them wherever they went. "Of course. Anyone would. Even you."

"Alright, then. Take a break." It took a lot to fatigue Nero's wife, and it was apparent that she was becoming so. "A good training exercise with Wing should fix you up nicely."

-Raven's accommodations-

Lilya flung herself at Maxim, determined to wrest the weapon from him. Her bid for the sword was in vain, however, and Maxim waved it teasingly above her head. "Come on. Get it!"

Lilya growled, frustrated. She had no means of getting to him. Unless— her eyes brightened as she thought of something. She climbed up onto Raven's bed and began pounding on the wall.

Maxim was confused. "What are you doing?"

"You'll see." Lilya replied loftily. And he soon did.

"Why are you doing this!" He yelped as weapons began falling to the floor around him. "This is going to hurt!"

"Exactly."



- Nero's office-

Nero watched in horror as the live camera feed showed Lilya apparently doing something. "What the hell!" His voice trailed off as the numerous blades began raining down on the cowering Maxim. "Raven."

"Yes?" She turned in the doorway, a quizzical look on her face.

"You might want to go rescue Maxim. It would appear the Lilya got upset." Raven took one look at the screen, which now showed weapons hitting dangerously near Maxim, and sprinted out the door.

Raven moving around H.I.V.E. was not unusual. However, Raven hurtling through H.I.V.E. in plain sight at extremely high speeds was. As Raven ran, she hoped that she would get there in time to prevent an unpleasant occurrence. The sight of Maxim hunched on the floor attempting to make himself as small a target as possible for the deadly weapon rain had panicked her. She would never again make the mistake of underestimating Lilya. An important rule: never underestimate your enemy, or in this case, the little deceptive eight-year-old daughter of yours. Raven reached the door to her quarters and stopped in front of the retina scanner.

"Access granted, Raven." The assassin dashed into the room and searched frantically for Lilya and a hopefully unharmed Maxim. Two guilty faces looked back at her. Raven sighed in relief. Safe. For now. But what was Lilya thinking? She could have killed Maxim, and she knew it full well. What, then, was her purpose?

"Mummy! He started it! I showed him what you do with knives, and he said I was wrong so then I said I was right and he was wrong and then he took my sword thing and then—" Raven held her head as Lilya continued to rant about what Maxim did. Maxim occasionally interjected with a "No I didn't!" or "Liar!"

"Enough!" Raven was thoroughly annoyed, and it was only 9 in the morning. She knew she would go crazy if she had to hear one more complaint. "Go to Colonel Francisco."

The twins immediately stopped accusing each other. "We didn't mean it! We were just playing! We didn't hurt anything! Just take away our birthday party!"

\_Hmm. \_ Raven thought. \_Colonel Francisco is the key. Professor Pike didn't work out, and neither did Ms. Leon. They just petted her.\_ Aloud she said, "No. You misbehaved, you get the consequences."

"But—"

"I would advise going now. Before I reach 1. 5— 4— 3—"

"We're going, we're going!" Lilya and Maxim tripped over each other as they hurriedly backed out the door. Raven sat down on her bed with a sigh. She loved them, but they were so difficult to take care of. She would always have to be vigilant, especially after this demonstration. Raven looked around her room and took in the weapons on the floor. She wasn't looking forward to cleaning this mess

up.

"Raven." Her head snapped up, hands already unsheathing her katanas. When Raven saw it was just her Blackbox, she relaxed again. Without looking at the screen or even really picking it up, she answered.

"Yes?"

"Mr. Fanchu would like to speak with you." H.I.V. replied.

Raven groaned softly. Nero must have told Wing that she was coming to do a training exercise, and now she had to. "Yes, Mr. Fanchu?"

Wing's worried voice came through the Blackbox. "Raven? Where are you? Dr. Nero said that you would be here in two minutes ten minutes ago."

"I had some problems with some students. \_Young\_ students." Raven laughed a bit. Big understatement.

Raven couldn't see Wing's face, but she could guess at his thoughts. He probably had a blank look on his face as he tried to work through her words, which didn't make sense, unless you realised that Raven wasn't talking about problems subduing someone. "Problems?"

"Problems. But I will be there." Raven thought for a moment. "Oh, yes, Wing? Would you mind coming to my quarters after? I need your help."

Wing was puzzled. Raven rarely ever needed help. "Yes, of course. But why do you need help?"

"You'll see." Raven said, then quietly, so Wing couldn't hear her. "Unfortunately."

-Training Cavern-

"You're improving." Raven looked at Wing, who winced and carefully avoided touching his new bruises.

He smiled wryly. "Perhaps. But I hope that whatever help you need does not involve more weapons."

"Erm, yes, wellâ€¦" Raven cleared her throat. "Um, well, in fact, it does."

Wing raised his eyebrows. "Not too many, I should think."

Raven cleared her throat again. "Please, think again."

"I'm bringing the rest of them." Wing's eyes were open wide.

-Raven's quarters-

Otto scanned around Raven's room. "And you want us to, what exactly?"

"Help clean up if you can. And be careful, please. I do not want to be responsible for your inability to participate in classes for the next two weeks. I would prefer to leave that privilege to you." Raven indicated the mess around the room.

"Right?" Laura looked dubiously at the disorder surrounding her. "Are you sure we have to do this?"

"I do like to keep my promises, hasty as they may seem in hindsight." Wing's glance at Laura was loaded with 'if you back out, you will regret it.'

Laura quickly amended her statement. "Of course, we'll be glad to."

"Good. Now, you can figure out for yourselves where everything goes, but" Raven detailed where each type of weaponry went, and concluded with, "And thank you."

Otto, Wing, Laura, and Shelby got to work, with the occasional "Ow!" or "Stupid!" Raven watched them carefully, and answered questions when they weren't sure where to put something. Eventually, she heaved a sigh and got to work with them.

-A half an hour later-

Raven looked around the now-clean room with a feeling of relief. That job was finished, thankfully. Now to check how the twins were doing. Raven flipped open her Blackbox. Colonel Francisco's face appeared on the screen. Raven stifled a few creative words when she saw what was going on in the background. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

"Yes, Raven?" The Colonel's voice was genuinely surprised.

Raven smothered another curse. "Have you seen the twins, Colonel?"

"No, why do you ask?"

"Because they were supposed to come to you a long time ago." Raven's voice was filled with fear.

Otto coughed quietly. "Er, well, I saw them running through the halls headed in the direction of the hangar while we were waiting for you in the training center."

Raven spun around and glared at Otto. "And you didn't see fit to mention this earlier, Malpense?" Her switch to last names didn't go unnoticed by the four.

"No, because we thought they were doing something for you." Otto glanced around at his friends, hoping they would back him up.

Laura stepped in. "Aye, they looked like they had a purpose."

Raven smiled grimly. "Oh, they always have a purpose. The trick is knowing what their purpose is. Now, I would appreciate it if you went out to look for them." The four friends nodded and quickly backed out

the door. Raven followed them and made sure they were out of earshot, before swearing loudly in Russian.

Lilya and Maxim ran through H.I.V.E., giggling as they went.

"This is fun! I wonder when Mummy will realize that we're gone?" Maxim speculated aloud.

Lilya giggled. "I can't wait until she does. It'll be great!"

The spat resulting from being locked in Raven's room was completely forgotten. The twins were united with one goal: to have as much fun as possible before being punished.

Maxim suddenly changed directions. "Hey, I know! Let's go to the hangar!" They had been planning on hiding in the kitchens for a while, but Maxim's idea caught Lilya's attention.

"Why?" Her voice was suspicious, but more from the fact that Maxim came up with going to the hangar than the actual idea of hiding in the hangar.

Maxim thought it was obvious, but explained anyways. "Because there are Shrouds there, silly! We can hide in them!"

"Oh! Good idea!" Lilya's eyes lit up as she grasped the point of this new plan. She had been running alongside Maxim as he changed direction, but now she sped up, gesturing for Maxim to hurry. "If we get there soon, we can find a great hiding place!"

"But why? It won't matter. We'll be able to find a good hiding place whenever we get there."

Lilya paused for a moment. "That's true, but stillâ€¦ HURRY!"

Maxim tried one more time. "There's no point inâ€¦"

"Oh, just COME ON!" Lilya cut him off as she picked up the pace even more. Maxim dutifully followed along, panting a bit. They reached the door to the hangar, and stopped short at the door. More importantly, they stopped short at the retina scanner locking the door.

"What theâ€¦ how do we get in?" Maxim puzzled over this problem.

Lilya frowned. "Uh, hope we can get in?" She stood by the door, mulling the complication over. "Oh, I know! We can just wait here for someone to come out or in."

"But what if they see us?"

Lilya waved this additional trouble aside. "If they see us, we can still go somewhere else."

Maxim was unconvinced by this logic, but he couldn't argue. The two stood by the door, boredly waiting. They almost didn't notice Professor Pike walking into the hangar, nose buried in some schematics. It took him almost running into Maxim for the twins to notice. "Heyâ€¦ let's go." Maxim waved a hand in front of Lilya's face. They slipped inside after the Professor.

#### 4. Undeserving

**\*\*Alright, I really need to stop putting this on hiatus randomly. Also, the problem with HIVEmind coming up as . when I put periods in is fixed in this chapter. (Thanks to Lord Sanguine who pointed it out to me.) And thank you, reviewers. Reviews make my day. :) Especially since my birthday is tomorrow. \*Hinthint\* So, without further ado Chapter 4... actually, one last thing.\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer-A/N:I do not own HIVE. I do, in fact, own Lilya and Maxim, though.\*\***

-IV-

Raven was turning H.I.V.E. upside-down in her frantic search for the twins. She ran through the halls, yelling about Lilya and Maxim. Otto and Wing were combing the corridors of H.I.V.E., all heading to the hangar.

"WHERE ARE THEY!" Raven's voice rang out. She was frustrated that nobody had been paying enough attention to help her in her search. Although Otto had said that they were headed towards the hangar, they could have gone anywhere after being seen. The assassin in her was quickly being buried under her motherly protectiveness. She saw a class being dismissed, and sprinted in front of them.

The class looked at her in bewilderment. "Raven?"

"HAVE YOU SEEN MY CHILD?" Raven was faced with blank stares. "I guess not." She sighed.

Otto and Wing walked through the hallways of H.I.V.E., looking around.

"I wonder what the girls are doing." Wing mused aloud.

Otto laughed. "Probably back in their rooms, making fun of us for being Raven's errand boys."

"Perhaps not. They would be as reluctant as you or I to get on Raven's bad side."

Otto grinned. "Probably. Still, they will definitely be taking their time."

They were so wrapped up in their conversation that neither of them noticed the door of the hangar closing. The door of the hangar that they just walked past.

Lilya giggled. They had been in the hangar all of two seconds, and already escaped a pair of students. Maxim gestured frantically from his safer place further in.

"Come on!" He hissed. "Hide, before the Professor comes back!" He gestured at the multiple Shrouds. "Your idea, now do it."

"Alright, I will." Lilya lifted her chin and began making her way back to a Shroud. "Then you. Unless you're too SCARED." As she said

the last word, she ran into her target. "Ouchâ€¦"

Maxim laughed. "You weren't watching where you were going! HAH!"

"You try walking around in here without bumping into something!"

Maxim laughed again. "I have. See?" He pointed at his feet, and then at the door.

Lilya was deflated. "Ohâ€¦ but still. GET OVER HERE!" Her eyes widened as she noticed the Professor getting closer to Maxim, still engrossed in whatever diagrams he was looking at. At Lilya's last words, however, he looked up.

"Whaâ€¦? Huh? What are you two doing here?"

"Uh-ohâ€¦" Lilya whispered.

Lilya looked like a rabbit in the headlights, frozen in place. The Professor looked at her and repeated the question.

"Why are you in here?"

Maxim slipped behind a Shroud, leaving Lilya to deal with Professor Pike.

"Um, looking for the bathroom?" Lilya didn't sound too sure.

The Professor blinked again. "I have no idea what you're doing in here, but I know that's not why."

A timid voice came from behind the Shroud. "Hiding from Mummy. She was being mean."

The beleaguered man tilted his head, looking a bit like his creation HIVEmind., trying to locate the origin of the voice. "Maxim? What are you doing there?"

Maxim poked his head out from behind his hiding place. "Oh, you know. The usual." He bared his teeth in what he hoped was a winning smile, but was more like a grimace of pain.

"Well, come out." He walked out of the hangar, looking back to check the twins were following.

They looked at each other and sighed. "Fine, fine, we're coming." Lilya called.

Maxim followed the Professor dejectedly. Lilya was even more deflated, if that was even possible. The thought came to Maxim that their birthday party was dangerously near. He fell back to Lilya's level.

"We're turning nine next week. What ifâ€¦" He let the question hang. Lilya knew what he meant, though.

She shut her eyes. "She won't!" The Professor looked back at the twins, Blackbox open. Lilya lowered her voice. "She won't."

"How do you know?" Maxim was tired of Lilya lording it over him, and wanted an explanation.

Lilya's voice gained confidence. "She won't, I know. She likes us too much."

Throwing an apprehensive look at the door that would lead them closer to their final destination, her brother said in a monotone. "You better be right. You're the one who got us into this in the first place."

Nero sighed, rubbing his eyes. Raven had alerted him to the situation via his Blackbox. He had asked HIVEmind to try to locate the twins, and was now waiting for the result. He flipped his Blackbox open and placed it on his desk. HIVEmind's blue wire-framed face appeared. Nero leaned forward incrementally.

"Anything?"

"Professor Pike would like to speak with you." HIVEmind replied efficiently. His head was replaced with Professor Pike.

"Yes?"

"Lilya and Maxim were in the hangar. I'm assuming they were not supposed to be there." He stopped talking, and Nero could hear the twins' voices.

He breathed a quiet sigh of relief. "Thank you, William."

Pike nodded. "Would you like me to bring them to Raven or you?"

"My office, please. It's high time they got a talk."

The Professor nodded again. "Alright."

Nero nodded curtly and cut the connection. He closed the Blackbox, and then thought of one more thing to do. "HIVEmind, would you tell Natalya that the Professor has Lilya and Maxim? And then please ask her to come to my office. It's time to lay down the law."

End  
file.